

Three Arrows, or Six?

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Date: 19 January 2014

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[0:00] I had the pleasure of hosting eight students in my home this weekend.

! We just wrapped up a weekend called United Disciple Now weekend.! So he's not a teenager. And I am even more fearful of parenting now than I was.

In all seriousness though, it was a great weekend. God really moved in our student ministry, in the hearts of our students. And I would ask you as a church, ask them about their United Weekend.

Ask them what they did this weekend. And I would ask my teenagers not to respond with, mmm. I would appreciate that. Don't let them get out of here without asking them about that weekend.

Please, please don't. That being said, I am tired. I have lost much sleep. And, you know, I've discovered, I'll be 29 next month, approaching that 3-0.

[1:16] I'm a little depressed. But I've discovered that, you know, as you get older, pizza and potato chips at like 1 a.m. in the morning just does not sit well.

So, if I seem not to be in my right mind this morning, if I seem to say something and you kind of, what? What did he say? Please be gracious. Please come and ask me to clarify later.

But I do hope that I won't say anything. And as I say about, talk about not being in my right mind, I think some of you may be growing nervous that I brought a bow and arrow. I will not loose any arrows into the crowd.

Unless you fall asleep. So, please don't fall asleep. Please pay attention. And, well, I would appreciate it. And if you see some of our students falling asleep because they stayed up way too late last night, just give them a nudge or a kick or slap in the back of the head for me.

And I would appreciate it. But in all seriousness, I want to read this morning in 2 Kings. You can turn there. 2 Kings 13. You'll notice in the bulletin, I believe the bulletin says we're going to start in verse 14.

[2:30] I have decided to back up a couple verses. Because I think starting in verse 10 will teach us something. Will show us something very important. So, I'm going to back up.

It's a lengthy passage I'm going to read. We won't deal with all of it. But I do want to get the whole story. The whole intent of the author in this morning.

So, please follow along as I read 2 Kings 13, starting in verse 10. It says this. In the 37th year of Judah's king, Joash, Jehoash, son of Jehohaz, became king over Israel and Samaria and reigned 16 years.

He did what was evil in the Lord's sight. He did not turn away from all the sins that Jeroboam, son of Nebat, had caused Israel to commit. But he walked in them. The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, along with all his accomplishments and the power he had to wage war against Judah's king and Messiah, are written about in the historical record of Israel's kings.

Jehoash rested with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. So, very quickly, don't be confused. There are kind of multiple Joash's going on here.

[3:46] Kind of used interchangeably with Jehoash. That's because there's two Joash's reigning at the same time at this point. One is reigning in Judah. One is reigning in Israel.

And so, don't be confused by that. Moving on. Verse 14 says, Then Elisha said, So he took them.

And he said to the king of Israel, So he struck the ground three times and stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, You should have struck the ground five or six times.

Then you would have struck down Aram until you had put an end to them. But now you will only strike down Aram three times. Then Elisha died and was buried. Now marauding bands of Moabites used to come into the land in the spring of the year.

Once, as the Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a marauding band. So they threw the man into Elisha's tomb. When he had touched Elisha's bones, the man revived and stood up. [5 : 22] So Hazei, king of Aram, oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. But the Lord was gracious to them and he had compassion on them and turned toward them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He was not willing to destroy them. Even now he has not banished them from his presence. King Hazei of Aram died and his son Ben-Hadad became king in his place.

Then Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, took back from Ben-Hadad, son of Hazei, the cities that Hazei had taken in war from Jehoash's father Jehoahaz.

Jehoash defeated Ben-Hadad three times and recovered the cities of Israel. Okay, so now we have the complete story here.

I've titled this message this morning, Three Arrows or Six. Three Arrows or Six. Now that we've read the text, you probably understand why we have a bow and arrow.

[6 : 23] But we'll get to that. Please don't be distracted by it. But we will get to that. Starting out, I'd like to define the characters. Oftentimes we dive into the passage and we assume everybody in the room knows who we're talking about.

You know, we read names, read about people, events, places. And it's like, oh yeah, you know, we know who that's talking about. But it'd be like diving into a book midway through and thinking you would understand what the book is talking about.

The Hobbit is very big right now. If you've seen the movies, they're pretty good. But if you've read the book, like if you dove in halfway through, you would read about this dragon, Smaug. And you would think, why is there a dragon in the book?

Well, it's because you didn't start at the beginning and understand why the dragon has been introduced. When I was in college, I finally had the pleasure or displeasure, whatever you think, of watching a Harry Potter movie.

Harry Potter is very popular, especially among young people. But I came in halfway through the movie and some guy was killing unicorns. I didn't understand why he was killing unicorns. I didn't know who it was.

[7 : 26] And so they had to pause the movie for me. They just stopped and like, we would tell you who it is, but we can't really say his name because you're not supposed to say his name. You Harry Potter people know what I'm talking about.

And so they explained who it is and finally I said, okay, all right. Well, that's the case here. We want to explain who it is. So first, first I want to explain Joash. All right, Joash is king over Israel.

He was the 14th king of Israel. He achieved quite a bit of political and military stability, which is interesting because of the powerful nations around him. He actually subdues the king of Judah, as we saw in our text.

He subdues the king of Judah at one point. He really accomplished a lot of things. Now, obviously, he didn't really accomplish them, but God used him to accomplish them. He gives undeserved grace from God.

We know a lot of things about Joash based on history, but really for the purpose of our text, the only thing that we really need to know about Joash, the text is going to explain.

[8 : 27] Joash was a mediocre, faithless individual. Next we have Elisha. Now, Elisha is the prophet of God. Therefore, he's the mouthpiece of God.

And so, as you're reading this text, understand that though Elisha is speaking, God is speaking through Elisha. And so, we can consider Elisha's words in this text to be commands and words from God.

Elisha, like I said, he's a prophet. He's a mouthpiece of God. He was the successor of Elijah. If you're familiar with Elijah, that's one of the two people in the Bible that never died.

He got taken up into heaven on a chariots of fire. And so, he's the successor of Elijah. He prophesied during the reigns of five kings. He started in the final years of King Ahab, a very evil king.

And he finished in the years, as our text would say, of Joash, again, an evil king. Elisha was really known as a miracle worker. He worked a lot of miracles.

[9 : 26] He brought back a child to the power of God, obviously. A child back to life. He made an iron axe head float in a stream. Probably the most famous miracle, he was called a bald head.

All right? And so, he's walking along, and all of a sudden, 42 guys, a band of young men come out, and they say to Elisha, or Elisha, sorry, and they say, Go up, baldy, go up!

They were really making fun of him, because his master, Elijah, had just been taken up into heaven. So, they're kind of making fun of Elisha. Like, why aren't you going up into heaven, too? What's the matter with you? And so, Elisha doesn't really do anything, but God sends two she-bears out of the woods, and they maul all 42 of these young men.

So, nope. Don't make fun of bald people. So, that's your application for that. That's probably his most famous miracle, but he was known as a miracle worker.

He really is a huge contrast to Elijah. Elijah spent his years of ministry in hiding. Spent his years of ministry as like a thorn in the side of kings. They hated him.

[10 : 32] Elisha, though, really is more similar to Samuel, as far as prophets go. Elisha's welcomed in the courts of kings. He's a prophet that kings go and speak to, and get wisdom from, even though the kings, as we'll see with Joash, are not necessarily good kings.

And so, a very different prophet than his master, Elijah. And then lastly, Aram. What is Aram? Aram is really the predecessor in history, if you're familiar with history, is the predecessor of the nation and land of Syria.

We know from Genesis chapter 10 that Aram is actually descendant from Noah's son, Shem.

They're really a minor character here. It really serves as the vehicle that kind of drives the dialogue. It's God's judgment on Aram that will drive the dialogue here. And so, with that, those are our characters. Those are the players in our text.

Those are the actors. Now, before we dive in, I do want to point out, because we're not really going to deal with it, we're going to point out verse 25. Verse 25 says, Now that's important.

[11 : 59] not necessarily to the application of our text this morning, but important in that God will work His purpose. He will work His will.

He will work His promises. Keep that in mind as we go through, as we march through this text. In the end, the sovereignty of God will win. That's a given.

So keep that in mind as we march through the text. And so, starting, let's just start in verse 10. Examining it. And we really want to get the author's intent out of this. We want to understand what is the writer trying to say to us, because then, really, I believe that's the only way we can make honest application to our lives.

It's been said many times, Scripture has one meaning, many applications. If you don't really kind of wrestle that meaning out of the text, you might be in danger of making poor application.

I don't want to do that this morning. And so, let's wrestle with this text. The first thing that we find out, the first thing we read about is this guy, Joash, or Jehoash.

[13 : 01] Right? Joash is a faithless idolater. We read here in the first couple verses, it's the typical formula that the writer uses to describe kings.

He comes to the king. Joash, he reigned in Israel. He did that which was evil in the sight of God, walked in the same way as his fathers, worshipped idols, and then we move on.

We get to Elisha. Because Joash, or Joash's character, is so underwhelming, so faithless, that he doesn't deserve much more. Even though this is the guy that really achieves a lot for Israel, God achieves through him, we don't spend much time on him.

Let's get into Elisha. To Elisha. Let's get to Elisha's death. And so, Joash ruled Israel, and the author's like, hey, read about him somewhere else. Then we get to Elisha's death.

Elisha is dying in the next few verses. His death is certain. It's soon. And who shows up at Elisha's door? Good old king Joash. Joash comes, says in verse 14, When Elisha became sick with the illness that he died from, Jehoash, king of Israel, went down and wept over him and said, My father, my father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel.

[14 : 25] Now, why? If you're familiar with kind of the overarching story here, you know that Jehoash repeats what Elisha has said previously.

When Elisha's taken up into the air, Elisha says that. My father, my father, the chariots of horse, or the, sorry, the horsemen and chariots of Israel.

And so why does Joash, a faithless idolater, come to the very mouthpiece of Yahweh God? Why does he come? Is he out of concern? Is he mourning the passing of Elisha?

You know, the author doesn't really give a reason. I think there's a hint in what Joash says, My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel. Joash is losing a military piece here.

Elisha, the mouthpiece of God, is the reason Joash has any success. Right? Joash's idols aren't helping him. He is losing the prophet of God, the one who can tell the future, work miracles, bless things by Yahweh God.

[15 : 31] He's losing that. And I think the author is hinting at that. But, that's really not important in the grand scheme. The importance is what Elisha says.

Reading in verse 15, Elisha responded, Take a bow. Like, I'm not even going to waste time answering you, Joash. Just grab a bow. Pick it up, please. I have something from God to say to you.

So he says, Take a bow and arrows. So he, being Joash, got a bow and arrows. And Elisha said to the king of Israel, Put your hand on the bow. So the king put his hand on it and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

Elisha said, Open the east window. So he opened it. Elisha said, Shoot. So he shot. Elisha said, The Lord's arrow of victory. Yes, the arrow of victory over Aram.

You are to strike down the Arameans and Aphek until you have put an end to them. So here's Elisha. He's dying. The illness that's going to kill him. And he says, King Joash, take a bow.

[16 : 35] Take some arrows. And Joash obeys because you would obey too. He said, Take a bow and arrows. And then Elisha like puts his hands over Joash's hands.

And he's like, Open the east window. Now don't miss this. This is the primary verse that explains what's to come. Right?

It explains its primary importance to understanding the text. God is about to offer Joash an opportunity to partner with his sovereign will.

This is an amazing opportunity, especially considering how faithless Joash is. And so Elisha placing his hands on Joash is a picture of this.

Listen, it's not you, Joash. I'm going to partner with you, God, Yahweh God, in my sovereign will.

Jeremy Walker calls this a moment, he says, this is a moment of glorious and indescribable blending of God's sovereignty with man's responsibility.

[17 : 39] Not something that you can explain, but it is what is being offered here. And so they work together. God invites Joash into this partnership with his sovereign will.

Verse 17 describes, it's a statement of martial intent. In this time period, you didn't have, well, you didn't probably have email, obviously.

You didn't have mail. And so how would you communicate that you wanted a war with your neighbor? Well, you could go out and maybe go over and talk to them, but they might kill you.

They might be a little upset and be like, you know, we're not going to let you go home. We're just going to kill you now and maybe that will avoid war. And so what you would do, they would send an envoy, he would go to the edge of the territory, of their territory, and he'd look into the enemy's land and he'd take an arrow or a spear and he would shoot it into their land.

And then at the top of his voice he might declare something like, hey, we declare war on you. And I guess the hope is that someone around like from that land is, oh man, did you hear that? Did you see that arrow?

[18 : 44] And so really, according to culture, you had this moment, a declaration of war, an official declaration of martial intent, and then you had 30 days that you could settle these hostilities.

Now this makes sense if you read the Old Testament, a lot of times it's like Israel was arrayed on this side and the Philistines were arrayed on this side, and you're wondering, what are they waiting for? Why aren't they just fighting? Well they're trying to settle hostilities. There's this martial intent, you've got 30 days or we're going to come to war with you.

And so you have this picture of martial intent, it's a declaration of war, God is declaring war on Syria.

That is what is happening here. But really that's only of secondary importance because the fact is they're in the middle of Israel. The fact is God is not bound by our cultural way of doing war. He doesn't have to warn Syria that judgment is coming.

It's coming. What this is, it's a picture, right? It's a picture and it's really more for Joash than it is for Syria because there's probably not a lot of Syrians standing around seeing arrows flying, right?

[19 : 52] And so it's a picture and what it is, it's a promise to Joash. Read what he says. He says this, I just said, the Lord's arrow of victory. Yes, the arrow of victory over Aram.

You are to strike down the Arameans and Aphek until you have put an end to them. But beyond a promise, what this is for Joash is it's an invitation.

And a challenge. God's like, man, the Syrians are getting struck. My judgment is coming on them.

And it's victory is certain because I work my sovereign will, I work my purpose.

There's no doubt. But Joash, partner with me in this. I would use you to strike Syria. And so it's a promise, but it's also an invitation for Joash to faithfully partner with God's sovereign will.

These verses are so crucial to understanding this text. You say, why? Because without these verses to kind of set off what comes after, Elisha's next request is a little silly.

[21:04] Grown men don't just generally start shooting arrows and keep shooting them until Elisha says stop. And so without this challenge, without this invitation to stir something up in Joash's heart, without this promise, the next request Joash really kind of fulfills, as we'll see.

And so it's very, very important. Verse 18, obviously, the invitation, God's invitation now becomes a challenge, right? Elisha removes his hands.

Elisha's not helping him shoot anymore. He says this, he says, then Elisha said, take the arrows. So he took them and he said to the king of Israel, strike the ground. So he struck the ground three times and stopped.

Okay, what is he doing? A lot of people, you know, there's a little debate about it. Some scholars say, you know, he actually took an arrow and struck the ground. Really, I think the text is kind of leading us to believe, he's like, alright, shoot some more arrows.

Shoot some more arrows out that window. And so Joash, okay, alright, Elisha's dying, I'll humor him. So Joash releases three arrows and stopped.

[22:13] He strikes the ground once, twice, and three times. And then Elisha, in verse 19, becomes angry. Why? It seems that Joash fulfilled his request.

Would you or I shoot more times? Would you or I understand the gravity of what's happening here? Not without this previous invitation, not without this previous challenge from God, of saying, hey, I'm striking Syria, partner with me.

And so Joash, or Elisha, becomes angry. Three times is unacceptable to Elisha. Now there, again, there's debate. People talk about three times being the perfect number in the Bible.

But the author's not really dealing with that. It's simply, it's pretty obvious that Joash, again, has been faithless. Now consider the first couple verses, verses 10 through 13 of our text, right?

Joash, the holy, uninspiring, and faithless character of Joash, continues. It continues.

[23:22] God has invited Joash into this partnership, and that prospect has not stirred even the slightest bit of passion out of Joash. He does the bare minimum. Three arrows, all right, I'm done.

What next, Elisha? Why? Why would he not shoot more arrows? Understand what God's promising here. He's not just promising that Joash suddenly, you know, becomes like a really popular king.

This is stability. This is political freedom from Syria. And Joash like answers this promise, hey, I'm going to deliver you from your enemy.

And Joash answers with, eh, that's, that's okay. I'll do the bare minimum. Now, obviously, God's not surprised.

We know from Psalm 44, 21, that God, what, he knows the hearts of men. He's not scrambling for a new plan. He's like, oh man, Joash, he messed up. What am I going to do now?

[24:19] I guess I'll find a different king. God's not doing that. God has a purpose. God has a will. God knows the hearts of men. He knew this would happen. He knew his faithlessness. But consider this.

Joash, the ramifications of his decision. Consider these ramifications. If Joash is obedient, Israel is delivered from Syria.

Now, just military speaking, that allows them to brace themselves against future and greater threats than Syria. But also speaking as a leader, as a king of Israel, consider what one faithful act from a faithless man might have done for Israel.

Would they not have been something stirred in the hearts of Israel to turn back to God? It could have changed the entire course of history for Israel if Joash had simply had just an ounce of passion.

Had not done the bare minimum, but had gone on, had shot five or six arrows. Now, like we read in verse 25, God is faithful.

[25 : 34] Despite this bare minimum, God does allow Joash to defeat Israel three times, and Joash's reign sees a level of political and military stability that many before him had not seen.

Really, worldly speaking, he's a successful king, even though the Bible doesn't really care about that. He's a successful king. verses 20 through 21 deserves mention.

It's a cool story. It's an interesting story. It doesn't have necessarily a whole lot to do with our application or our text, but it's like this interesting addendum. Elisha's buried, and all of a sudden you have these Israelites and they're trying to bury this guy, and suddenly a band of Moabites is coming in, and it's very common.

This wasn't like, oh man, the Moabites, we've never seen them before. The Moabites, they raided each spring. There was just, even in the Semitic world today, there's times of war.

It's like, this is the fighting season, guy. It's time to go to war. So the Moabites come in, there's these Israelites carrying a dead friend, someone they killed, who knows, but they're trying to bury him.

[26 : 41] And so here come the Moabites, and they're like, oh man, let's do something with this body. And so the way that they buried bodies back then, it wasn't like six feet under and cover the grave. It would probably be in either a cut out cave or a natural cave.

And so they roll the stone away, toss them in, and they're going to run and hide. Now imagine their surprise. I like to think maybe they actually tossed them in and just ran, because they're afraid.

Maybe they're hiding in the bushes, and like, man, Moabites. And here comes a dead friend, like, what are y'all looking at? You see those Moabites over there? It's an interesting story. It's cool.

It's amazing that God, you know, Elisha dies. He's not like Elisha. He doesn't get like raptured up into the sky by chariots of fire. But God is faithful to Elisha's faithfulness, and even in death, God uses Elisha to bring life.

And so I had to mention that. Now we won't use that this morning. And so a squandered opportunity by Joash changes the course of history. Or at least it cements Israel's destruction.

[27 : 48] So what about us? What is the application for us? And I think the question is three arrows or six.

You see, this morning you too have been invited into a partnership with God as He works His purpose. Now would faithfully and passionately partner with God and fire five or six arrows and defeat your enemy?

Or are you going to do the bare minimum and fire one, two, or three? Will you dwell in a pit of mediocrity and faithlessness like Joash did?

Marcus Luttrell was a lone survivor of Operation Red Wings. It was a SEAL Team 10 mission gone wrong in Afghanistan. So these men went out on this mission and everyone is killed except for Marcus Luttrell.

And this is what Marcus Luttrell says about a mediocre life. He says anything in life worth doing is worth overdoing. Moderation is for cowards.

[29 : 04] Three arrows or six. And I want to address three groups of people this morning. The first group I want to address is young people, not just teenagers. You may be a teenager, you may be a young professional, a college student, but young people, how have you responded to God's invitation in your life?

Is your life driven by the desire to serve God? Is that what drives you every day when you wake up in the morning? What are you passionate about? Ask yourself that. Have you ever considered it?

What are you passionate about? What comes to mind? Is it call of duty? Is it entertainment?

Is it the opposite sex? Is it scholastic achievement? Are you more worried about grades than you are about Jesus Christ? How have you responded to the invitation and challenge of God?

Have you responded with three arrows? Do you consider that enough? You're like, I shot my three arrows and then returned to your dead passions? This is what John says, 1 John 2, 15-17, do not love the world or the things that belong to the world.

[30 : 17] If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For everything that belongs to the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride in one's lifestyle is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever. Have you shot your three arrows and returned to your dead, worldly passions?

things? Or is there something that stirs? Maybe you don't even know what it is. But there's something stirring inside of you, something that's beginning to burn inside of you, something that invites you out of your dead life and invites you to be passionate about God, to partner with God's will.

Remember, God's going to work his will. That's a given. God's invited you to partner with it. 1

Timothy 4.12 says this, let no one despise your youth.

Instead, you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Oh, that something would stir in the younger generation, my generation.

[31 : 32] Something that would stir in us, that we would cast off worldly achievement, that we cast off entertainment, comfort, wealth, video games. This is a condemnation of me.

God has so pressed this passage and this message on my heart, because I realize as I'm reading and studying, man, Chris, you are a coward.

You strive for moderation and shoot your three arrows and then you're done. The bare minimum.

God has called us into a partnership, not for comfort, not even for morality, though he has called us to morality.

That's not what the partnership is for, but for eternal consequence. Guys, there will be a new call of duty next year, and the next year, and the next year, until some business exec decides it's not making enough money, then there will be no more.

There's nothing eternal about it. your grades won't matter 20 years from now. Please, strive to do well in school.

[32 : 42] But your grades aren't going to matter. The girl or guy that you're interested in at 13, I hate to break it to you, but you're probably not going to marry that person. In six weeks, you probably won't even like that person anymore.

You'll like someone else. And so why would you strive for something so temporal, something that has no eternal consequence? Three arrows, or six, what would you do?

What would you shoot? Some of you need to trade your plans for God's. Don't waste your life climbing a pay scale.

Spend it in service to God. Spend it. Some of you need to surrender to ministry. Some of you need to be missionaries. Some of you need to be evangelists.

Some of you may even be called to be martyrs for the cause of Christ, and you will spend it all.

Moderations for cowards. Three arrows, or six.

[33 : 44] The next group I want to speak to is parents, and I do this with humility and understanding that I am not a parent. I'm not a parent.

So I do this with humility. And I do this from a scriptural standpoint. This is just what scripture is telling us. The text really for y'all holds a lot of significance. If you're familiar with Psalm 127, four through five, here's what it says.

Like arrows, like arrows, in the hands of a warrior are the sons born in one's youth, or daughters. Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them.

Such men will never be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the city gates. What are you doing with your arrows? What have you done with your arrows?

Are you raising passionate soldiers for Jesus Christ, or are you raising moderate cowards? What have you done? I brought my bow with me this morning.

[34 : 49] My wife and I just got these, and I'm really a terrible shot. I have yet to shoot anything with it other than a target, and my wife really encouraged me to bring my target up here and show you just how good a shot I am.

I decided against that. I know that y'all probably appreciate that. But here it is. It's a bow, right? It's a little more advanced than the bows that they would have used in the biblical text.

But you know what? This instrument, this bow, really is of secondary importance. This is not a high-end bow by any means. It's a pretty cheap bow.

But no matter how good your bow is, it's only as good as your arrow. So you could spend thousands, and believe me, you could spend thousands on bows. You bow hunters know what I'm talking about.

So you could spend thousands on a bow, and then you walk into the arrow shop and you're like, man, just give me the cheap ones. I've already spent thousands on my bow. I need cheap arrows. Because I can't afford them.

[35:51] Or maybe you go out to a tree on your land, and you're like, I'll just make my own arrows. No matter how good your bow, if your arrow is crooked, your bow is worthless.

You're not going to hit what you aim at. You might try and like Kentucky windage it a bit and try and see, maybe. I should probably explain. If you want to know what Kentucky windage is, come ask me later.

And so your arrow, right? Like arrows in your quiver. That's your children. Arrows are measured by their straightness.

You go up to the bow shop here in town, and you're like, I need some arrows. And you're like, well, you want arrows that are this straight or arrows that are this straight. And you pay more for straighter arrows. I did not know this. But are you crafting your arrows?

Are you looking at your children and saying, listen, when I loose them, you know, yeah, I need to do my due diligence. I need to make sure the bow is strung right.

[36:51] I need to make sure the bow is strong and able to send them far. But if your arrow is crooked, you will not hit your target.

And so when you finally send your children from your quiver, from your bow into the world, will they fly straight? Have they flown straight?

The quality of the bow is of little consequence if your arrow is not straight and if your tip is not sharp. You are the bow.

What is the condition of your arrows? Are you dedicated to training them? Are you honing them? Are you going each day and like sanding them down and measuring them and making sure that they're as straight as you possibly can make them?

Are you unrelenting in your training of your children? You refuse to give up. We've all seen it. Like, listen, I used to joke around and say that I told Jonathan I wasn't going to talk about him today.

[37:58] I lied. I apologize. I joked around, you know, like I grew up, I don't think I saw my first PG-13 movie until I was like 24. I don't know.

But then Jonathan, like, Spider-Man comes out when he's like 10. And he's like, man, it was so Spider-Man, it was amazing, Chris. I'm thinking, look, I didn't get to see PG-13 movies.

No, I'm not contributing my parents. Please don't, like, look at them. Because y'all have done it too. You know what happens? Like, your oldest is like this model citizen. And then your second is close to a model citizen.

And then, like, your third, you're like, I'm tired. Your fourth or fifth, some of y'all, I'm like, I'm really tired. Some of y'all are like, man, I'm raising grandchildren now.

Are you honing them? Are you unrelenting? Making sure they're straight, that they hit their target, that they hit their destination. Bows and arrows are not meant for safety.

[39:06] Yeah, you can shoot targets with them. But it doesn't say, you know, blessed is the target shooter whose cribber is full. It says, blessed is the man. It calls him a warrior. Bows are meant for war.

Are you taking aim and shooting your children at the heart of the enemy, prepared? Or are you turning around like, oh, there's a safer area over there. I'll send them to college.

Protect them as long as I can. And they're not even prepared. They're not even straight. They're not even ready for battle. Where do you fire your arrows?

Are your children a declaration of martial intent and war? Are you? Or are they just for target practice? And if you hit it, good.

If you don't, yeah, try again. Will you rejoice in battle as you send your arrows like, man, it's right in the heart of the enemy. There's another one for the kingdom of heaven.

[40:11] Does that define you? Three arrows or six? What would you do?

And then lastly, I try to think of a, I asked Laura this weekend. There she is. She's wearing a United shirt. I was like, you know, I want to talk to three groups.

I've got young people, I've got parents. It's like, what's a good diplomatic term for those who aren't necessarily young people. And so I'm going to go with her and I'm going to call you wise.

Those of you here who've got more wisdom than the rest of us, some of it shows on the head. Not calling you bald. If you want she bears to come. Yeah, y'all take cover.

Some of you here have been Christians. You've walked with Christ for many years. You've been faithful. Some of you may be feeling ready to rest. Say, you know what?

[41:10] I've carried the burden long enough. Let the next generation carry it. Don't buy into that lie. Don't buy into that lie from Satan.

This is what it says. David says this, the righteous thrive like a palm tree. This is Psalm 92. The righteous thrive like a palm tree and grow like a cedar tree in Lebanon.

Planted in the house of the Lord, they thrive in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, healthy and green. The Bible refers to gray hair, depending on your translation.

I like the King James. It refers to gray hair as the crown of wisdom. The crown of wisdom. This is what the Bible says about wise. Proverbs 13, 20, the one who walks with the wise will become wise. But a companion of fools will suffer harm. And so, young people, me, younger, parents, we need you, those of you who are wise among us.

[42:20] We need to walk with you so that we can become wise. Man, please don't check out. Some of you are like, I fired six arrows.

Well then, teach the rest of us to fire ours, to hone ours, to straighten them. If there are no people, no wise people to walk with, how will I, these students, these young parents, how will they become wise as well?

when God calls you home, when God calls us home, before you breathe your last, I pray that you will rest in the fact that you spent yourself for the glory of God, utterly spent for his renown.

our eyes should close in death, exhausted from battle. And when they open, it should open to the sound of well done, my good and faithful servant.

Moderations for cowards. For cowards. One of the members of SEAL Team 10 that died on Operation Red Wings was a guy, his nickname was Axe.

[43:45] His name was Matt Axelson. And, he was one of the two people left alive during the battle.

And he separated from Marcus Luttrell. Before they were separated, Marcus noticed that he had quite a bit of ammunition left. A lot of pistol ammunition to be exact. And so they're separated.

When they found his body, he had no ammunition. All his pistol rounds were expended. Would that describe us as believers?

And so when we finally rest, we've got no more arrows. Three arrows or six.

what will be for you. . Thank you.